

**ANDROGYNY AND MISCEGENATION IN *THE CRYING GAME*: THE CASE FOR A
PERFORMATIVE MODEL OF GENDER AND RACE**

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I

**wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. . . . I have
heard of your paintings too, well enough. God has given you one face,
and you make yourselves another. (Hamlet 3.1.138-143)**

Conventional diphasic notions of gender are interrogated in a recent movie *The Crying Game*. Fergus, a member of the Irish Republican Army, is forced to flee for his life from Belfast as a result of having bungled the kidnapping of a not uncunning British soldier named Jody. Fergus bungles the kidnapping because he unwisely strikes up a close relationship with his hostage as a result of which he finds himself in a quandary when the time comes to execute him. At the crucial moment Jody runs away, banking on the fact that his abductor will not be able to shoot him in the back, only to be knocked down by a British army Saracen. Not all of Fergus' companions escape with their lives from the ensuing conflagration. Once in London, Fergus makes good a promise to his former prisoner to seek out the latter's 'girlfriend' Dill. After meeting 'her,' Fergus, now going by the name of Jimmy, finds himself falling in love with a 'woman' who, to all intents and appearances, is set up as the object of male sexual desire.

There is one scene in particular where the boundaries demarcating the genders are radically blurred. I am referring, to that startling moment when, as they start to make love, Fergus removes Dill's dressing gown to reveal not a vagina but a penis. Fergus immediately takes refuge in the bathroom where he proceeds to vomit, a reaction, I would contend, with which many heterosexual male spectators would sympathise. Some have ascribed the intensity of the public response to *The Crying Game* (the title song of which is sung appropriately by the transvestite Boy George) to the degree to which it caters to a lurid fascination with the bizarre. I would argue that the excitement and controversy stirred up by the film are related to the problems that an androgynous figure poses for those binary models of sexual difference. The consternation of the heterosexual male both on-

screen and off, measures the degree to which comfortable expectations as to what is 'natural', have been rudely upset.

Laura Mulvey's seminal "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" asserts that mainstream films are addressed largely to men and reflect, reveal and play on the "straight, socially established interpretation of sexual difference which controls images, erotic ways of looking and spectacle" (1991: 432). They skilfully manipulate the male spectator's sexual and ego libido in such a way that the "alienated subject, torn in his imaginary memory by a sense of loss, by the terror of potential lack in fantasy" (1991: 433) which the eroticised figure of the leading lady reminds him off, simultaneously finds substitutive satisfaction in identifying with the leading male.¹ The appearance of the female star is always visually coded for strong erotic impact upon the male spectator. The latter's sexual attraction necessarily coexists, however, with a certain degree of horror precisely because the female's body connotes castration and hence 'unpleasure':

Ultimately, the meaning of woman is sexual difference, the visually ascertainable absence of the penis, the material evidence on which is based the castration complex essential for the organisation of entrance to the symbolic order and the law of the father . . . the woman as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look, always threatens to evoke the anxiety it originally signified. The male unconscious has two avenues of escape from this castration anxiety: preoccupation with the re-enactment of the original trauma (investigating the woman, demystifying the mystery), counterbalanced by the devaluation, punishment or saving of the guilty object . . . or else complete disavowal of castration by *the substitution of a fetish object or turning the represented figure into a fetish* so that it becomes reassuring rather than dangerous (hence overvaluation, the cult of the female star). (my italics; Mulvey, 1991: 438)

Mulvey points out that cinema, however, has "structures of fascination strong enough to allow temporary loss of ego while simultaneously reinforcing it" (1991: 435). As a form of compensation, films encourage the male spectator to identify with their male stars via a process which she interprets

in terms of the Lacanian mirror stage:

As the spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look onto that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipotence. A male movie star's glamorous characteristics are thus not those of the erotic object of the gaze, but those of the more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego conceived in the original moment of recognition in front of the mirror. (Mulvey, 1991: 437)

Significantly, Mulvey asserts that the male figure cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification as a result of which the male spectator is reluctant to gaze at himself.

Consequently, it is not difficult to theorise with regard to *The Crying Game*, the startling impact on the heterosexual male spectator of a film that disrupts precisely this scheme of things. The consequences of a penis being where a vagina 'must' be, a presence where judging by the other anatomical clues, there 'ought,' to be an absence, are radically disruptive. Expectations concerning sexual difference, are upset because androgyny blurs the boundaries between rigidly discrete gender categories. Moreover, in inviting the male spectator to identify with a bewildered Fergus, uncertain from the very beginning about his personal qualifications for the job of 'terrorist' and unsure right to the very end about having a relationship with a so-called 'she-male,' *The Crying Game* simultaneously dislocates the compensatory regime of imaginary identifications.

Perhaps most importantly, the play of difference indicated by androgyny, that is, the co-presence of both masculine and feminine physical characteristics in one body as a result of which it is impossible for the onlooker to firmly decide upon the gender, may serve to undermine the attribution of a fixed gendered core to any human being on the basis purely of anatomy.

II

an old black ram

Is tugging your white ewe. Arise, arise!

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.

(*Othello* 1.1.85-88)

Recent research has suggested that the perception of skin-colour plays a role analogous to that of the sexual organs in the course of the psychic maturation of the subject. Gwen Bergner, for example, states that questions of "racial difference pry open a system of representation that seems closed when women, exclusively, are equated with lack" (1995: 85). Indeed, Mary Ann Doane observes in "Dark Continents" that blackness and femininity are 'intersecting marginalities' that share the same space in the European imaginary: the "force of the category of race in the constitution of Otherness within psychoanalysis should not be underestimated. When Freud needs a trope for the unknowability of female sexuality, the dark continent is close at hand" (Bergner, 1995: 86).

Jean Walton contends that

early psychoanalysts would have argued that a male/female binary is a much more 'universal' one than a black/white binary insofar as all humans are assumed to grow up in a context where they are distinguished from one another by gender, and where one is constituted [solely] by one's identification within and desire across that binary division. . . . (1995: 779)

Walton insists correctly that "maturity also implies the full assumption of a heterosexualized *raced* adulthood; according to this model, one must be fully 'white' (or perhaps fully one's 'race,' however that might locally be constructed) in order fully to become a subject" (1995: 779). Her point is that, despite the silence of mainstream psychoanalysis in this regard, "racialized binaries were and continue to be a reality in the world inhabited by Freud's patients and the patients of other psychoanalysts for as long as the institution has existed" (1995: 779). This is as true, she stresses, for the racist history of the United States as it is for Europeans, "whose fantasmatic life is permeated by the Orientalist and Africanist ideologies that underwrite and justify what, by the time psychoanalysis was in its nascent stages, had become a long and vexed history of European colonialist expansion and decline" (1995: 780).

Frantz Fanon's seminal *Black Skin White Masks* represents, of course, the first attempt to rethink psychoanalysis in terms of the fundamental determination enacted upon the subject by his/her race. The particular significance of Fanonian psychoanalysis resides in his attempt to argue that what he views as the negro's 'pathological condition' is equatable with a form of neurosis that is the consequence of being black and non-European in a racist, Eurocentric socio-cultural order. The inevitable product of processes of acculturation is a split psyche: the negro internalises, to the detriment of his mental health, the privileges accorded to whiteness as well as the denigrations of blackness that historically form such an undeniable part of European culture. This results in the formation of a curiously hybrid creature who, although endowed with black skin, nevertheless partakes of an undeniably eurocentric collective unconscious in what is, from an existentialist viewpoint, an act of self-denial and '*mauvaise foi*' .

Influenced by both Freud's model of the unconscious and by Carl Jung's notion of the collective unconscious, Fanon argues that the individual unconscious of the West Indian in particular and the negro in general is shaped by the eurocentric world in which *he* grows up and is educated, where *he* lives, moves and has his being.² It is the consequence of "*l'imposition culturelle irreflechie*" (Fanon 1967: 154): "We read white books and we assimilate little by little all the prejudices, the myths, the folklore which come to us from Europe" (1967: 155).³ It is in this manner that the Antillean "has appropriated all the archetypes of the European" (1967: 154), a particularly harmful process for the negro precisely because "*in Europe, Evil is represented by the colour black*" (1967: 152). Fanon stresses that

the West Indian has recognised himself as black, but, via a shift in the moral meaning, he has perceived (the collective unconscious) that one is negro to the extent that one is bad, blind, wicked, instinctual. . . . In the collective unconscious, black = ugly, sinful, shadowy, immoral. In other words, to be black is to be someone immoral. (1967: 155)

The internalisation of such stereotypes makes for the fragmentation of the negro's psyche, of which there are two symptomatic indices. Firstly, the phenomenon of "projection" (Fanon, 1967: 165):

To the extent that I discover in myself something unusual, something reprehensible, I no longer have but one solution: I have to get rid of it, to attribute its paternity to another. In so doing, I put an end to a circuit of tension which threatened to upset my equilibrium (1967: 154)

In *Remembering Fanon* Homi Bhabha quotes Fanon, to similar effect:

I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me . . . I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects . . . I took myself far off from my own presence (1983:115).

Secondly, internalisation induces, "transitivism" a breaching of the boundaries of self to the point where self identifies itself almost entirely with other. The consequence of all this for the negro is that irreconcilable self-division which Fanon's title so neatly encapsulates: the rejection of most that is black and the embrace of most things white.

Bhabha's point⁴ is that the subjectification of both coloniser and colonised must be reconceptualised in terms of the Lacanian imaginary. The goal in so doing is to call into question the rigidly dialectical Self/other, White/black relationships which for Fanon structures an essentially manichaeian colonial situation⁵. Bhabha's view in this regard is undoubtedly related to Fanon's brief allusion to Lacan, to wit, his suggestion that Lacan's notion of the mirror stage might prove useful for analysing the colonial situation: it

would be interesting, on the basis of Lacan's theory of the mirror period, to investigate the extent to which the image of his fellow built up in the young white at the usual age would undergo an imaginary aggression with the appearance of the Negro. When one has grasped the mechanism described by Lacan, one can have no further doubt that the real Other for the white man is and will continue to be the black man. And conversely. Only for the white man The Other is perceived on the level of the body image, absolutely

as the not-self--that is, the unidentifiable, the unassimilable. (Fanon 1967: 161).

Fanon's allusion, however, betrays a misunderstanding of Lacan which it is Bhabha's duty, seemingly, to rectify.

Bhabha seems to suggest that what Fanon would have said had he fully understood the significance of Lacan's work, is that the "ambivalent identification of the racist world . . . turns on the idea of Man *as* his alienated image, not Self and Other but the 'Otherness' of the self" (1983: 116). It is "not the Colonialist Self nor the Colonized Other, but the disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness" and thus the "liminal problem of colonial identity". For Bhabha, the colonial subject is in effect not, caught in a no (wo)man's land, being neither self nor other, neither negro nor white, but forever suspended in the gap between. (1983: 16-7)

Bhabha offers, in this regard, a useful summary of the exotopic nature of the split colonial subject in particular and of the subject in general. He points out that the "very place of identification, caught in the tension of demand and desire, is a place of splitting" precisely because "to exist is to be called into relation to an Otherness, *its look or locus*". Identity, whether at the imaginary or the symbolic levels, is thus

never an *a priori*, nor a finished product; it is only ever the problematic process of access to an 'image' of totality. . . . For the image as point of identification marks the site of an ambivalence. Its representation is always spatially split it makes present something that is *absent*--and temporally deferred. . . . The image is only ever an *appurtenance* to authority and identity; it must never be read mimetically as the 'appearance' of a 'reality'. (1983: 118)

Identification, in short, is "always the return of an image of identity which bears the mark of splitting in that 'Other' place from which it comes" that produces a liminal state of "alienation within identity".

Through a racialised scene analogous to the castration complex, the subject is socially

positioned relative to the *perceived* possession of a particular skin-colour which, as a signifier of power and social privilege, plays a role analogous to the phallus. The subject, both white and non-white, is subordinated to a symbolic order ('langue') that actively privileges whiteness and denigrates non-whiteness, the racist demarcations of which s/he then ventriloquises in the 'parole' of his/her everyday existence. The non-European is inserted into a symbolic order in which, as a result of his/her lack of whiteness, s/he has historically also been an object of exchange and thus relegated to a position of servitude, subservience and inferiority.

Moreover, much like the European female who, according to Joan Riviere is condemned to a life of masquerade, the non-European turns away from itself and its race, as Bhabha points out in "The Other Question," to totally identify with the "positivity of whiteness which is at once colour and no colour" (28). Thereby, in an act of "disavowal and fixation the colonial subject is returned to the narcissism of the Imaginary and its identification of an ideal ego that is white and whole" (28). Evidently, if the black male finds himself in a position of marginalisation akin to that of the white female [where she is marginalised by her lack of a penis, he is marginalised by his lack of a white skin], the black female is, from this point of view, doubly marginalised.

From the perspective, however, of the European, the non-European, like the European female, signals 'castration' and thus threatens lack (of whiteness). The European, accordingly, in this scheme of things experiences the horror of loss at the sight of non-white skin. Fanon documents the primal scene of *raced* subjectification in his description of the encounter between himself and a white child who sees a negro for the first time. As Bhabha suggests in "The Other Question," moreover, the racist stereotype functions in a manner analogous to that of the fetish in order to disavow the horror of loss attendant upon the sight of non-white skin. Hence, to adapt Mulvey, the substitution of comforting fetish-objects such as the golly-wog that are tantamount, in fact, to a calcified description of the non-European or the turning of the non-European into a fetish (the eroticised negro conflated with his/her sexuality, for example).

It is possible, in the light of this, to adapt Mulvey's account of the cinematic experience of the male spectator in order to theorise the white spectator's response to the figure of the non-white on screen. Mainstream films cater comfortingly, I would suggest, to the white spectator's unconscious expectations as to the negro's 'natural' subservience and inferiority and his or her role as object of

exchange between whites. These expectations, while comforting to the European's sense of his/her own primacy and superiority, are, however, tinged by the horror of loss that non-white skin signifies. Hence, the fetishistic substitution of racist stereotypes (Hollywood's dancing negro, for example) and/or the eroticisation of the negro. Hence, as well, compensatory imaginary identifications with the figures of the white co-stars.

It is from this point of view that I would argue that the fact that Dill is of racially mixed heritage is as important as his/her ambiguous gender and sexuality in *The Crying Game*. This is a film pervaded by a subtle refusal of discrete categories. Jody, for example, is anomalous as much on sexual as on racial grounds. Firstly, he is not homosexual *per se* in the common acceptance of the word. He is evidently something even more disturbing within the masculine imaginary: a bisexual. He is to some degree, attracted to women, but is more fond of so-called drag queens who are themselves neither 'men' nor 'women'. Hence the significance of his initially cryptic comment to Fergus that the 'tart' that seduced him to his doom is not really his 'type.' Secondly, as a man of African descent, whose history is more than likely one of enforced transplantation, slavery and colonialism, Jody serves as an English soldier in an operation long described by Irish nationalists as a colonialist occupation conducted by a hegemonic power.⁶ Moreover he serves amongst a people known to describe themselves as the 'niggers of Europe' in a 'colony,' in England's own 'backyard.'

From the outset, the spectre of miscegenation as well as the accompanying dialectic of desire and revulsion hangs over events. The opening scene depicts the process by which the black soldier Jody is lured to his demise by the prospect of a 'quickie' with a young white woman in a short skirt. She is later quick to refer to him scornfully as an 'animal' who was 'all over' her. It is difficult to say, however, which is the greater source of her disgust, the fact that he is black or that he is English. The Metro pub which Dill patronises is the setting for the performances, both musical and otherwise, of the drag queens some of whom, seem to be racially 'impure' as well as for mixed-race couples. One wonders to what extent Dill's abusive but rather childlike white boyfriend is attracted to 'her' penis and to what extent he is drawn to the imprecision of 'her' exotic brown skin.⁷ It may indeed be the latter which initially attracts Fergus himself.

Moreover, Dill's insecurity and even neuroticism (revealed in 'her' constant questioning of Jimmy as to whether he loves 'her' and will take care of 'her') is perhaps related as much to 'her' racial

'impurity' as to 'her' ambiguous gender. Faced with her reflection in a mirror, Dill cries out "I don't recognise myself." Her lament is a function, I would suggest, of a protean physical appearance that defeats on racial as much as on gendered grounds the possibility of a fixed imaginary identification. I would suggest that Dill's mixed race provokes in the viewer, confusion rather than horror (of loss). The ease with which s/he seems to be accepted within an essentially white society as an equal while remaining undeniably a sexual object of exchange among white males, confounds the unconscious expectations of the white spectator. Her beige skin dislocates concomitant fetishistic strategies of disavowal that would seek either to make her conform to racist stereotypes or to turn 'her' into an eroticised object. The latter is, of course, complicated by the dialectic of attraction and repulsion that attends her androgyny.

At the same time, Fergus himself does not offer the spectator a compensatory imaginary identification on the grounds either of his gender or his race. Ethnically-speaking, Fergus is a hybrid. After being forced to 'emigrate' to London, he finds himself as an Irishman involved in several experiences analogous to those faced by the ex-colonised non-whites who in large droves sought to colonise the United Kingdom in reverse after the Second World War. Under an assumed identity Fergus/Jimmy is forced to work as a manual labourer in order to support himself. He eventually becomes embroiled in an ethnic conflict with his wealthy English employer who, filled with a seemingly unjustified dislike for him, scornfully hurls the derogatory epithet 'Paddy' at him, makes fun of his accent and delights in extracting money from his wages for accidents committed on the job.

In a symbolic order predicated upon exclusion, the difficulty in precisely pinpointing what a racial/cultural 'half-breed' is *not*, renders miscegenation an anomalous prospect of the same order as androgyny. The result of this is a confusion within particular individuals and groups, of signifiers of degeneracy, savagery and/or inferiority on the one hand, with those of moral priority, civilisation and effective superiority, on the other. In a manner analogous to androgyny, miscegenation gestures to the infinite deferral of the presence of a substantial raced core, as much as it denies a 'pure' cultural identity to any social formation.

III

Gender and Race as Performance

The consternation and anxiety that characterise the heterosexual white male's reaction to racial, gender and sexual hybridity solicit remedial strategies other than the 'homogenising fictions' which such anomalous examples disrupt. The patriarchal, racist symbolic order of European civilisation deliberately distinguishes (and thus privileges) both masculinity from femininity and the white from the non-white by forcibly fixating the play of difference/deferral between the sexes and the races. Indeed this is Grosz's point with regard to the phallus: the

two sexes come to occupy the positive and negative positions not for arbitrary reasons, or with arbitrary effects. It is motivated by the already existing structure of patriarchal power, and its effects guarantee the reproduction of this particular form of social organization and no other. They are distinguished *not* on the basis of (Saussurian [sic] 'pure') difference, but in terms of dichotomous opposition or distinction; not that is, as contraries ('A' and 'B'), but as contradictories ('A' and 'not-A'). In relations governed by pure difference, each term is defined by all the others; there can be no privileged term which somehow dispenses with its (constitutive) structuring and value in relation to other terms. Distinctions, binary oppositions, are relations based on one rather than many terms, the one term generating a non-reciprocal definition of the other as its negative. (1990: 124)

Similarly Biddy Martin argues that the "phallogocentric meanings and truths of our culture have repressed multiplicity, and the possibility of actual difference, by appropriating difference, naming it opposition, and subsuming it under the 'Identity of Man.'" (1988: 13).

Perhaps the real question to address is not the basis or *origin* of phallogocentrism but, rather, how it *functions* and to what end. Phallogocentrism operates, I would suggest, to erect distinctions at the point of deepest resemblance. It revolves less around a false recognition of an other as the same, than it operates to differentiate the 'same' and to 'recognise' the radically proximate, as distinctly 'other.' It is not a question of phallogocentrism originating in a confusion of separate sexual categories, it is a matter, rather, of phallogocentrism functioning to reinforce boundaries between categories which are always inherently in danger of being elided.

The fetish plays an indispensable role in reinscribing these boundaries. Bhabha's point in *The Other Question* is that the fetish is always the index of the yearning for an original presence: the scene of fetishism is one where the subject's "desire for a pure origin that is always threatened by its division, for the subject must be gendered to be engendered" (1983: 27). Arguing that the discourses of sexuality and race relate in a process of functional overdetermination especially, within the colonial context Bhabha also contends that the racist stereotype hinges around the "myth of *historical* origination racial purity, cultural priority" (my emphasis) and expresses, as such, the desire for an "originality . . . threatened by the differences of race, colour and culture" (1983: 26 - 7).

As a necessary supplement to the psychoanalytic "narrativized myth of *origins*" according to which an "originally undifferentiated state of the sexes suffers the process of differentiation and hierarchization through the advent of a *repressive law*", Judith Butler seeks to proffer in *Gender Trouble* a Foucauldian genealogy of the "*exclusionary practices*" which *function to produce* gendered identity (Butler, 1990: 330-32, emphasis mine).⁸ Butler's point is that the masculine subject deliberately marks off the feminine through exclusion, a process which instantiates gender specificity and subsequently organises identity. As a result, "identifications exist in a mutually exclusive binary matrix conditioned by the cultural necessity of occupying one position to the exclusion of the other". Gender is, in short, the "disciplinary production of the figures of gender fantasy through the play of presence and absence in the body's surface, the construction of the gendered body through a series of exclusions and denials, signifying absences" (Butler 1990: 333 - 35).

Dollimore (1991) is of the similar view that psychoanalytic models of homosexuality, in theorising that repression and sublimation of homosexual desire which secure 'normal', heterosexual identity and social organisation, must be supplemented by a Foucauldian model. This latter seeks to show that it is homophobia which coercively secures a heterosexual identity and social organisation and enforces the heterosexual norm of things by policing its boundaries, encouraging certain types of male behaviour and sexuality and, thus, defining the limits of acceptable masculinity.⁹

In *The Other Question* Bhabha mixes a psychoanalytic approach with Foucauldian discourse analysis. His goal is neither to deconstruct colonial discourse nor to reveal its ideological misconceptions or repressions. Openly confessing his indebtedness to the work of Edward Said, Bhabha states that his objective is, rather, to examine the "productivity of colonial power" (1983: 19) and its "regime of truth"

(19) in the fabrication of a 'knowledge' of the colonised. It was, of course, Said who, in criticising Foucault for his ethnocentrism, first discussed how Europe discursively constructed its racial and cultural Others. As he makes clear, the "Orient is not an inert fact of nature" (Said 1993: 132). It is, rather, an "idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery and vocabulary that has given it reality and presence for the West". Orientalism is a "system of truths" the deliberate "distillation of essential ideas about the Orient--its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness into a separate and unchallenged coherence" enshrouded in an appearance of objectivity. The discursive construction of the Oriental serves a specific, vital purpose: it is complicit in the binary process by which the "idea of European identity as superior to all the non-European peoples and cultures" is promulgated, that is, the "idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all those non-Europeans". The Orient functions, as such, to confirm the "unchallenged centrality" of a "sovereign Western consciousness" (Said 1993: 132 - 144).

Said's view of the way in which the Oriental has been constructed historically as a discourse speaks volumes about both the manner in which the heterosexual European male has produced his other Others in an exclusionary process based on imaginary value judgements and his ultimate goal of: his self-consolidation. Woman, as Mulvey points out,

stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning. (Mulvey, 1991: 433)

The construction of lack unconsciously imposed upon the vagina has thence been translated into the production of a whole system of conscious 'truths' concerning all the other ways in which women have been entirely 'lacking' by reference to men. All this serves to obscure the fact that the self-definition of the male is inextricably linked to these constructions imposed upon the female. The masculine imaginary

depends on the image of the castrated woman to give order and meaning to its world. An idea of woman stands as lynchpin to the system: it is her lack that

produces the phallus as a symbolic presence, it is her desire to make good the lack that the phallus signifies. (Mulvey 1991: 432)

The implication is that femininity, as much as masculinity, is a category constructed in and through discourse. Each biological male and female, by virtue of his or her insertion into the social order, is made both to ingest and to regurgitate in his or her everyday acts and gestures the regulatory prescriptions concerning what it means to be 'masculine' or 'feminine.' Gender is, from this point of view, less the expression of anatomy than tantamount to a performance.

Butler's 'performative' model of gender stands in stark contrast to the conventional 'expressive' model according to which gender is understood to be an attribute that reflects the substance of anatomical sex. She argues that the "gender discontinuities that run rampant within heterosexual, bisexual, and gay and lesbian contexts" are proof that "gender does not necessarily follow from sex, and desire, or sexuality generally, does not seem to follow from gender". Gender coherence and heterosexuality are, she contends, instead a "regulatory fiction" that functions to combat the threat posed by bodily "disaggregation". It is worth quoting Butler's notion in this regard of the 'performativity' of gender at length: she argues that

acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this on the surface of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organising principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence of the identity that they otherwise purport to express becomes a fabrication manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality, and if that reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is the function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body. In other words, acts and gestures articulate and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality. (Butler

1990: 336-337)

In short, gender is a performance and the 'inner truth' of gender a fantasy inscribed on the surface of bodies. 'Pure' genders are fabricated, "produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity" (Butler, 1990: 337).

Perhaps a 'pure' race is also a truth-effect, in this case of what Bhabha characterises as the discourse of historical originality and unity. Perhaps race too is a category produced by everyday acts, the function of a certain sleight of hand that retroactively assigns an illusion of an internal raced core to the subject. The 'expressive' model by which race might be understood as that set of attributes that refer back to one's genetic heritage may be the effect of the yearning for clearly defined races and the consequent anxious distrust of miscegenation that this generates. The idea of race can perhaps exist only within a binary framework, that is, when predicated upon negation and exclusion and when defined against potential intermixture. Perhaps, in the final analysis, all racial and, by extension, cultural identity is, like gender in Butler's schema, ultimately tantamount to a masquerade, a performance by bodies compelled to signify as their inmost essence, style and necessity the cultural unease with hybridity and, consequently, the unconscious taboo on inter-racial sexual intercourse.

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Endnotes

1 . Subsequent film theorists such as Mary Ann Doane have sought to extend Mulvey's insights in this regard by theorising the experience of the female spectator.

- 2 . Bergner is right to stress the unmistakably masculinist assumptions that underlie Fanon's project.
- 3 . In what immediately follows, any translations from the French (and thus errors) are my own.
- 4 . In "Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition" (and elsewhere)
- 5 . See his *The Wretched of the Earth*.
- 6 . See Nicholas Canny, for example, among others.
- 7 . This is, seemingly, a 'drawing-card' for many males, both white and black, judging by the autobiographical testimonies of many of the women of mixed race in Camper's Miscegenation Blues tired of being pursued for their exotic tint.
- 8 . Foucault coined the phrase the 'economics of untruth' to denote Marxism's continued preoccupation with the economic determination of ideology qua false consciousness, that is, as a distortion of the real conditions of existence in the service of the economic and political domination of a given social class. Opposed to the emphasis implicit within Marxism on the *repression of the truth*, Foucault preferred to emphasise instead the *production of truths*, to be precise, knowledge qua a conscious will to 'truth' in itself neither true nor false; hence, his preferred focus being on what he called the 'politics of truth.' Foucault's point is that power achieves its goals of subjection not by repressing the truth but by producing particular discourses which form the very objects of which they speak.
- 9 . In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault stresses that sexuality is not a stubborn drive to be held in check; it is rather a historical construct which enables the operation of power relations. The power which controls sexuality does not primarily work through prohibition, law or taboo, whereby the boundaries of the permissible are established: on the contrary we have witnessed in recent centuries a virtual explosion of sexualities, what Foucault describes as a veritable 'implantation of perversions,' that have, consequently, been made to proliferate rather than to disappear. With this implantation goes a new specification of individuals, and the emergence of the homosexual who comes into being as a type of person. 'Perverts' emerge because they are required as the product of the encroachment of a type of power on bodies and their pleasures.